

Department-of Disease Control Weekly Disease Forecast No.176_RSV (9 – 15 September 2018)

The Department of Disease Control reveals the results of the severe pneumonia sentinel surveillance carried out by the Bureau of Epidemiology and the Department of Medical Sciences in 30 hospitals during 2012 to 2016. Among the children under 15 years old who had severe pneumonia, most were found to be infected with Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), i.e. 187 out of 425 cases (44%). There were 9 deaths. For the adult patients, 4 RSV cases were found among the 97 severe pneumonia patients (5%) of which 2 died.

The year, as of August 20, 2018, the laboratory surveillance carried out by the Department of Medical Sciences in 9 hospitals showed 65 RSV cases (10%) among 620 severe pneumonia cases. The RSV cases were found more in July (29%) and in August (47%).



This week disease forecast reveals a continue trend of RSV occurrence during the rainy and cold seasons. Cases can be found in all age groups but severe illness normally occur in small children, babies born prematurely, elderly people aged over 65 years and those with underlying chronic diseases such as diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, and impaired immunity.

RSV causes respiratory infections. It can be spread easily through droplets from a sneeze or cough of an RSV patient. People can also be infected by touching hands with an RSV infected person or contaminated items. The virus enters human body through nose, eyes and mouth. Symptoms begin 4 to 6 days after infection. Most cases are mild, with symptoms of fever, a running nose, cough and ear infection. Illness can be severe in babies under 6 months with wheezing and shortness of breath, irritability and poor feeding. Diagnosis can be confirmed by laboratory tests for the virus in nose and throat samples. Young children and those with severe illness usually need hospitalization for proper symptomatic treatment.

The Department of Disease Control advises all people to wash hands often especially before having meals and after using toilets. Prevention can be done by avoiding close contact with persons with flu or pneumonia illnesses particularly babies born prematurely and babies aged 1-2 months. An RSV patient should be absent from school or work, put on a surgical mask and wash hands often to prevent spreading of the virus to others.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422.



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